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Funeral Sermon.*

REV. 2, 10.

The most important hour of man's life is the hour of his death. For the end of man's life settles finally and beyond recall or dispute the question whether a man's life has been a success or a failure. It has been a success if a man has, during his lifetime, learned how to die in the Lord. It has been a failure if a man has wasted his opportunities of preparing to meet his God.

Death comes from the hand of God. It is He who has given life as an opportunity for seeking and finding grace. It is He who has set the bounds for our lives, and who, in death, calls us to receive what by His grace has been won for us, or what we have chosen for ourselves through misuse of the time of grace.

And whenever death comes into our midst, God is dealing with two parties: He deals directly with those whom He calls into eternity; He deals indirectly with those who through the death of another are reminded of the fact that they, too, are hastening forward unceasingly to the end of their own lives.

God has come into our midst and has called away one who had been our companion. And as death has come into our midst, we have gathered in the house of God. We have done so for a very definite reason. We have not chosen the house of God merely because it is a very convenient place for gatherings of this kind, but because we want to recognize the fact that God is dealing with us. More than this — by gathering in the house of God, we, on the one hand, declare that we have reason to believe that he who has been called from

* The departed had been foreman in a foundry. It was known in advance that all the employees of the foundry, white and colored, a hundred strong, would attend the funeral, besides hundreds of others, very many of whom had seldom entered a house of worship before. Altogether, it was one of the largest funerals ever held in the city.

our midst did during his lifetime, and therefore does now, after his departure from this life, belong to God. And, on the other hand, we declare that we want to give heed to the voice of God as it speaks to us through this death, and that we want to consider this death in the light of His Word of everlasting truth.

And as we consider the peculiar circumstances of, and the facts connected with, the death of our departed brother and ask what specific lesson of the revealed Word is thereby most forcibly brought to our mind, our thoughts involuntarily turn to the exhortation contained in the words of our text: —

*“BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE
THEE A CROWN OF LIFE.”*

These words contain

1. *Sweet comfort with regard to the death of our brother;*
2. *Loving, yet earnest, exhortation with regard to ourselves.*

1.

“Be thou faithful unto death.” This was the message which God sent through St. John to the pastor of the church at Smyrna and to the church committed to his charge.

Smyrna was a city on the western coast of Asia Minor, north of Ephesus. During his third missionary journey St. Paul had tarried at Ephesus for three years. And during this time he and his helpers had spread the Gospel of Christ in all the cities of that region and hence also at Smyrna. And at this place a church had been gathered. They were poor people and had to suffer much persecution for the Lord’s sake. But they considered the Gospel of Christ ample recompense for both poverty and persecution.

What is that Gospel? It is the truth concerning Christ which Isaiah expresses in the words: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Is. 53, 6. “Surely, *He* hath borne *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows. . . . *He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, *He* was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon *Him*, and with *His* stripes *we* are healed.” Is. 53, 4, 5.

And now, through St. John, the Savior exhorts the church at Smyrna: Be thou *faithful*; be faithful *unto death*; keep that Gospel until you die; yea, if you must die for the sake of that Gospel, die gladly, but remain faithful; keep the truth. He also offers an inducement: “I will give thee a crown of life,” life in heaven, life forever; in no other way can you receive eternal life than by faithfully keeping My Gospel. On the other hand, if you do keep that Gospel, My word is pledged to you that you shall have the crown of life.

And the promise thus given to the church at Smyrna is a source

of comfort to us at the bier of the departed. For that promise was made *directly* to that one church; but it is written for all, in order that all who hear or read it should consider it as spoken to themselves, obey the exhortation, and lay hold of the promise contained in those words.

"Be thou faithful"; keep My Gospel. These words were written also for the departed. They presuppose that he had the truth, that he had the Gospel of Christ, and that he believed it. And such his history shows to have been the case.

He was born of Christian parents beyond the seas. But the fact that his parents were children of God did not change the other fact that he was "flesh born of flesh," John 3, 6, that is, that he was born with the same original sin as all other human beings and therefore was by nature a child of wrath even as others, Eph. 2, 3, and could not enter the kingdom of God unless he was born again, John 3, 3. But the fact that his parents were children of God did bring this advantage to him, that in accordance with God's command he was brought to Holy Baptism in his earliest infancy.

And it was here that his spiritual life, his Christianity, began. For Baptism is not merely "an outward sign of an inward grace." Baptism is not the act of man, but of God. If it were man's act, it could accomplish nothing. But being God's act, it can and does accomplish all that divine power and love wants to accomplish thereby. If it were man's act, it would be a hollow ceremony; but being the act of God, it brings to man all that Christ has won for him and works in him that faith in the blood of Christ by which he becomes a possessor of all the grace and blessings of God. Therefore St. Paul makes the strong and clear statement that God "has *saved* us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus 3, 5. Therefore, too, we properly say that the Christianity of the departed began when, in the first days of his life, he was brought to receive the holy Sacrament of Baptism.

But the faith thus implanted in the heart would have withered and perished, had it not been constantly nourished and strengthened with the Word of God. Again he was benefited by the fact that he was born as the child of Christian parents. For those who have known his parents tell us of the love of Christ which dwelt in their home. The Word of God was the foundation and the center of all their efforts in the raising of their children. And when their boy had reached the age at which it became necessary to send him to school, they chose for him a school which offered not only good and useful secular training, but which, at the same time, nourished also his soul by daily instruction in the Word of Life. Thus he prospered and grew in the faith of his Lord Jesus Christ day by day.

Then came another day which is memorable in his life. Having

been taught to know the will of God unto his salvation, on the 29th of March, 1874, together with ten others, he appeared for confirmation at the altar of the Lord in the old church at the corner of Tenth and Commercial Streets. There he confessed his devotion to the Lord. There he made a solemn vow to the Triune God that he would ever confess, and never deny, the truth of the Gospel of Christ in all its parts. He solemnly vowed that he would ever be faithful, "faithful unto death."

Fifty years will have passed by this coming Saturday since that day. Of the class of eleven confirmed that day eight have gone before him into eternity. He is the ninth. The other two members of that class are sitting in this congregation at the present hour. And now, as we stand at his bier, we ask that all-important question: Has he kept that oath of allegiance unto the Lord? Has he been faithful unto death?

He has lived among you, walked among you. You have seen him in his sorrows and in his joys. Storms have passed over him during that time, and often his heart has been made to bleed. Temptations have beset him from without and sin from within. He has been made to fight the battles of a Christian's life. You know as well as any man can know whether he has forsaken the love of the Savior. And you know better than I whether he has lived in such a way as to show by his works that he was conscious of the fact that he was a child of God, that he was one of the redeemed of the Lord.

As we lay his body in the grave, our hearts are filled with joy, even though our eyes may flow with tears. And the source of comfort and joy is not what he has done, but what God has done for him and in him. He knew that he was a sinner in the sight of God. He had no thought of denying or hiding that fact. He knew that his best efforts could never reach perfection. He knew that he had merited the everlasting wrath of God. But he also knew that the Son of God washed all his sins away with His holy, precious blood. How many a time during those fifty years has he wept over his sins! But the redeeming blood of Christ afforded him the assurance that he was cleansed and purified in the sight of God. The Cross of Christ has been his song and his delight. As long as his ears were able to gather the sound of the Gospel of grace, the house of God was his refuge. And when his hearing departed, the Bible and devotional books were to him a flowing fountain of life and joy. When sorrow and woe befell him, his eyes looked to the Cross for strength, and when temptation and sin threatened to overwhelm him, he found strength from day to day in looking to the Cross of Christ.

When his state of health demanded that he should submit to an operation, we believe that he was the first to realize that the end of his pilgrimage was at hand. While alone for a moment before the

operation, he said to me: "I should have been glad to stay with my children a while longer; but since it is the will of God that it should be thus, I am willing and ready to go." And in the consciousness that the end was drawing near he appeared strong in the faith. While it was difficult to communicate with him on account of the loss of his hearing, what conversation could be had brought into relief a very marked assurance of childlike faith. His own sinfulness, but also the certainty of forgiveness through the blood of Christ, seemed so clear and sure to him that, when a question was put with regard to them, he answered in a tone which made one feel that he was surprised at the very thought of a question. He answered with the same tone of assurance as if one had asked him whether he thought that the sun would rise again in the morning. Whatever else might be subject to doubt, there could be no question about the fact that the blood of Christ cleansed him from all sin. In that full assurance he sought strength for the journey through the valley of the shadow of death by partaking of the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Savior. And when death came, more quickly than man had thought, he was ready to appear before God clothed in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

He has been faithful unto death; unto the end he confessed his faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; he made the blood of Christ his only hope. For the sake of that blood the Lord has received his soul into glory. For the sake of that blood his Savior has given unto him a crown of life.

2.

But while the words of the Savior are a source of comfort to us as we view the departed, they are also the Savior's voice pleading with *us*, warning, inviting: Be thou also faithful unto death, and I will give thee, too, a crown of life.

And these words put this question to you and me: Art thou faithful? Art thou faithful now? Oh, do not let us brush aside that question. It means life or death to you and to me.

Remember that there are two facts—two things which are an absolute reality. The one is sin, *your* sin. Do not try to cloak it or to hide it. Do not try to make the excuse that you are doing the best that you are able to do. The best that you can do can nevermore save your soul. The best that you can do must still condemn you before the judgment-seat of your God. For the best that you can do is not perfect in His sight. And He does demand absolute perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matt. 5, 48; and: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this Law to do them," Deut. 27, 26. That is God's Word. That is everlasting truth. And no excuse on your part and no argument and no denial can change the stern reality which these words

place before you. If you are satisfied with your works, and if that is all that you can offer before the judgment-seat of God, you are lost! As truly as God is God, you are lost. Do not deny it; do not ignore it. Confess it before God. If you love your own soul, if you want to escape everlasting hell-fire, acknowledge your sin with sorrow before the throne of God.

But remember also the other fact: "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." Matt. 18, 11. The very fact that you were lost is evidence that Christ came to save you. He, the ever-living Son of the Father, Himself the true and living God, came down from heaven and took upon Himself the nature of man, being born of a virgin. Upon Him was laid your sin. And He bore the punishment. He died for *you*. This also is truth, everlasting truth. Whoever or whatever you may be, whoever you may have been, or whatever you may have done—He died for you. You may laugh and scoff at it; you may deny it; you may scorn the blood of Christ; you may pass the cross of the dying Christ unheeding; you may curse the dying Savior and join in the rebellious cry, "Crucify Him!" But that fact remains—He died for you. And if you are lost, it will not be because Christ did not die for you. If you are lost, it will be because you did not believe in the Savior of sinners, because you did not want to be forgiven through His blood, because you turned your back upon your best and dearest Friend.

Do you really want to do that? He pleads with you, "Be thou faithful." Are you faithful, that is to say, have you accepted His Gospel and embraced Him in true faith? If not, why not? Have you ever sworn allegiance to the banners of the Cross? If not, why not? If He was willing to bear the agony of death for you, are you unwilling to accept what He has bought for you? Oh, do not say, you have no time! When death comes, you will find time to die!

But remember also, Christ says: "Be thou faithful *unto death*." It will not profit you to have embraced your Savior once unless you remain faithful unto Him until the very end of your life. Though you should keep the faith for ninety years and fall away only a moment before the end, the fact that you kept the faith for so many years will not save you. Only if you are faithful *unto the end*, will you receive the crown of life.

Bear this in mind, you who are now a child of God! The devil never gives up hope of regaining your soul for his hellish kingdom. Your faith will have to stand many a test. And you will have to fight many a fight. Sin within you will allure, the world will coax, and the devil will make use of every trick and every intrigue he can invent to deceive you. You will be told that it costs too much to be faithful to Christ. You will be told that you need not be so very careful. You will feel at times that you may relax a little in your

zeal. Do not give heed to the tempters! Always be watchful! Be faithful always, unto the end.

And remember that you cannot stand by your own power. God's hand alone can hold you. God's hand is extended to you through His Word. You need that Word. You cannot stand without it. Oh, do not tire of it; do not forsake it! Be faithful — faithful unto the end! Oh, do not say, "Unto the end is a very long time!" Remember, eternity is longer still.

Oh, in the presence of death do heed your Savior's voice. At the bier of the departed let us not spurn Him who saved our friend. Here, as we celebrate our brother's entry into everlasting glory, let us make a solemn vow that we will be faithful to the Lord — faithful unto the end. Amen.

Atchison, Kans.

F. W. C. JESSE.

Dispositionen über die neue epistolische Perikopenreihe der Synodalkonferenz.

Sonntag Graudi.

2 Kor. 5, 1—10.

Eine arme Familie hatte sich viele Jahre mit einer elenden Hütte begnügen müssen. Wie hat sie sich herumgedrückt, von allen Seiten eingeeengt! Regen und Schnee drang durch. Der Mann mußte, daß er nicht immer darin werde bleiben können. So hat er sich durch seiner Hände Arbeit und Sparsamkeit beizeiten etwas zurückgelegt, so daß er, wenn er umziehen muß, sich eine bessere Wohnung beschaffen konnte. Mit welcher Freude wurde der Umzug ins neue Haus beverfollt! Auch die Seele muß einmal umziehen. Paulus redet in unserm Text von dem Umzug der Seele. Auf jeden einzelnen unter uns angewendet:

Der Umzug unserer Seele.

Wir sehen,

1. daß unsere Seele umziehen muß;
2. was das in uns wirken soll.

1.

Eine alte Hütte. B. 1: „unser irdisches Haus dieser Hütte“. Das ist unser Leib, dein Leib, lieber Zuhörer. Irdisch, von Erde gemacht. Du bist Erde. Hiob: „aus Leimen“. Jemand hat ausgerechnet, daß man die Bestandteile des Leibes in der Apotheke für einen bis zwei Dollars kaufen kann. Es ist nicht ein fester Bau, gebaut für alle Zeiten, sondern bloß eine Hütte für zeitweiligen Gebrauch, ein Zelt, wie Pilgrime für einen kurzen Aufenthalt aufschlagen. — B. 1: „zerbrochen wird“. Eine zerbrechliche Hütte. Man

muß immer daran herumfliegen. Bald ist dies, bald jenes Los — Lunge, Leber, Galle, Herz usw. Würmer nagen daran herum: Krebs, Gicht, Rheumatismus, Fieber. Wenn eine alte Hütte haufällig ist, sucht man sie zu stützen. So mit unserm Leib. Man muß manchmal den Arzt holen. Da wird an dem Leib herumgeschnitten, es werden Einspritzungen gegeben usw. Trotz alledem kann die Hütte zu irgendeiner Zeit zusammenbrechen.

Eine Wohnung. In solcher Hütte wohnt deine Seele. B. 6: „Wir wohnen im Leibe.“ Wir, das heißt, die Seele, der hauptsächlichste Teil des Menschen. Ja, du hast eine Seele, einen Lebendigen Odem. Erster Artikel: mir Leib und Seele gegeben hat. Die Hütte ist vergänglich, die Seele aber unsterblich. Die Seele könnte freilich auch ohne ihre Hütte leben. B. 8: „außer dem Leibe wallen“. Wie schön wäre es, wenn unsere Seele herumfliegen könnte wie die Engel! Aber solange die Seele hier auf Erden ist, ist sie an den Leib als Wohnung gebunden. — In dieser Wohnung sind wir „beschwert“, B. 4, bedrängt, eingengt, wie in einem Kerker und müssen viele Unannehmlichkeiten erdulden. „Muß nicht der Mensch immer im Streit sein auf Erden, und seine Tage sind wie eines Tagelöhners?“ Job 7, 1.

Der endliche Zusammenbruch. Die morsche Hütte fängt an zu zerbröckeln. Nichts mehr will halten. Allerlei Vorzeichen, schließlich Zusammenbruch. Etwas anderes ist nicht zu erwarten. Selbst Hütten, von denen man meint, sie könnten noch jahrelang halten, brechen manchmal ohne viele Vorzeichen plötzlich zusammen, manche langsam und sanft, andere mit schwerem Krach. B. 1: „zerbrochen wird“. Es steht eine höhere Macht dahinter. Gewaltsam wird die Hütte abgebrochen. Folge der Sünde. „Das macht dein Zorn.“ B. 1: „Wir wissen.“ Ja, wir wissen, daß die Hütte zerbricht, aber nicht wann. Der Mensch fürchtet sich vor dem Zusammenbruch, vor dem Tode. Selbst Christen wünschen manchmal mit Paulus, daß man alles dessen könnte enthoben werden. B. 4: „wollten lieber nicht entkleidet, sondern überkleidet werden“, nicht erst hinfallen, vermodern und im Grabe verwesen, sondern wie ein Kleid das Unverwesliche anziehen, „auf daß das Sterbliche würde verschlungen von dem Leben“, daß man in einem Augenblick verwandelt und erneuert würde und ohne Tod zur himmlischen Klarheit kommen könnte, wie etwa Henoch oder Elias. Aber es ist nicht jedem so bestimmt. Die Hütte muß zusammenbrechen. Die Überreste werden ins Grab gelegt.

Der Umzug der Seele. Mit dem Zusammenbrechen der Hütte muß deine Seele ausziehen. Eine schwere Stunde für dich. Mancher verläßt die alte Wohnung, die er von Kindheit an gehabt hat, so ungern. Schwer für die Umstehenden, deine Lieben, die alles mit ansehen müssen. Scheidestunde auf lange Zeit, vielleicht auf ewig. Für deine Seele entsteht aber nun die Frage: Wohin nun? Wo ist eine neue Wohnung? Wohl dem, der sich das beizeiten überlegt und dafür

gesorgt hat! Denn wenn sich die Seele vom Leibe getrennt hat, ist keine Zeit mehr dazu, sich um eine Wohnung zu kümmern. Es gibt im Jenseits nur zwei Orte: Himmel und Hölle. Wo soll deine Seele dann wohnen?

Die neue Wohnung der gläubigen Seele. B. 1: „ein Bau, von Gott erbaut, ein Haus, nicht mit Händen gemacht, das ewig ist, im Himmel“. Nicht eine Hütte, sondern ein Haus, ein großartiger Palast. Nicht zerbrechlich, sondern ewig, für immer gebaut. Salomos Tempel ist dahin, die herrlichsten Bauten der Menschen fallen hin, aber dieser Bau bleibt. (Beschreibung dieser Wohnung.) „Jerusalem droben, von Golde erbaut.“ „Du hochgebaute Stadt.“ (Lied 443, 1.) Bedarf keines Lichtes: Der Herr ist Sonne und Licht. Selige Ruhe. „Wie selig die Ruhe bei Jesu im Licht! Tod, Sünde und Schmerzen, die kennt man dort nicht.“ Herrlichkeit, Freude, Wonne usw. Das ist die Stätte, von der Christus sagt: „Ich gehe hin, euch die Stätte zu bereiten.“ „In meines Vaters, Hause sind viele Wohnungen.“

Der Umzug der gläubigen Seele ins himmlische Paradies. Welch ein herrlicher Tag, wenn die Seele „so sanft und wunderbar verläßt die Stätt' der Element'“. „Getragen von den Engeln in Abrahams Schoß.“ Willkommen von Gott an den Pforten des Paradieses: „Ei, du frommer und getreuer Knecht“ usw. „Kommt her, ihr Gesegneten“ usw. „Das Klauschen der Harfe, der liebliche Klang bewillkommt die Seele mit süßem Gesang.“ Welch ein Wiedersehen! Aber das Schönste ist (B. 8): „daheim bei dem Herrn“: bei dem Herrn, der uns so teuer erkauft hat; bei unserm Vater. Daheim! „Dann wird unser Mund voll Lachens und unsere Zunge voll Ruhmens sein.“ „Dann werden wir sein wie die Träumenden.“

2.

Was soll diese Botschaft in dir wirken? Du hast wieder gehört, was du längst weißt (B. 1: „wir wissen“), daß deine Seele umziehen muß. Was soll das in dir wirken?

Sorge für deine Seele. Sorge beizeiten für eine andere Wohnung, ehe deine irdische Hütte zusammenbricht. So klug sind die Kinder dieser Welt. Ehe man aus einem alten Hause auszieht, sucht man eine neue Wohnung, damit man hernach nicht obdachlos auf der Straße sitzt. Niemand wirft seine alten Kleider weg, ehe er andere hat, die er anziehen kann. „Laß mich beizeit mein Haus bestellen!“ „Schickt das Herze da hinein, wo es ewig wünscht zu sein.“

Wahre Buße und Glauben. Himmel oder Hölle? Wohin? Gewiß in den Himmel. So trachte nun auch danach, daß du eingehst durch die enge Pforte! In die himmlische Wohnung wird nicht eingehen irgend etwas Gemeines, sondern nur bußfertige, gläubige Seelen. Die Wohnung wird von Gott zuerteilt. B. 10: „Wir müssen alle offenbar

werden vor dem Richterstuhl Christi, auf daß ein jeglicher empfahe“ usw. Die da Gutes getan haben, zum ewigen Leben, die aber übel getan haben, zur ewigen Schmach und Schande; diese „werden in die ewige Pein eingehen, die Gerechten aber in das ewige Leben“. „Wer da glaubet und getauft wird“ usw. Das steht unveränderlich fest.

Christus hat alles getan, was nötig ist, damit du in die himmlische Wohnung einziehen kannst. Er hat sein Leben für dich in den Tod gegeben; er hat eine ewige Erlösung erfunden. Halte dich an ihn, dann fällt dir als Kind Gottes die himmlische Wohnung als Erbteil zu, frei und umsonst. Paulus sagt R. 3: „so doch, wo wir bekleidet und nicht bloß erfunden werden“. Der Mensch ist „elend und jämmerlich, arm, blind und bloß“, Offenb. 3, 17. „Alle unsere Gerechtigkeit ist wie ein unfälig Kleid.“ Das einzige Kleid, das unsern Sündenschmutz bedeckt, ist Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit. Kleider des Heils. Rock der Gerechtigkeit. So ist für deine Seele recht gesorgt. — R. 5: „Der uns zu demselben bereitet, das ist Gott, der uns das Pfand, den Geist, gegeben hat.“ Gott hat uns seinen Geist gegeben, der Buße und Glauben in uns gewirkt und uns so zum ewigen Leben zubereitet hat.

Heiligung. Der Gedanke an die himmlische Wohnung droben mit Gott und allen heiligen Engeln und Auserwählten mahnt uns zur Gottseligkeit. R. 6: „Dieweil wir im Leibe wohnen, so wallen wir dem Herrn.“ R. 9: „Darum befeizigen wir uns auch, wir sind daheim oder wallen, daß wir ihm wohlgefallen.“ „Was deine Augen hassen, das will ich fliehen und lassen, soviel mir immer möglich ist.“ Wir sind der Sünde abgestorben, 1 Petr. 2, 24; wir sollen daher hinfort nicht uns selbst leben, sondern dem, der für uns gestorben und auferstanden ist, 2 Kor. 5, 15.

Trost. R. 6: „Wir sind aber getrost allezeit.“ R. 8: „Wir sind aber getrost.“ Die ungläubige Seele hat keinen Trost. „Ich fahre und weiß nicht wohin.“ Der Gerechte ist auch im Tode getrost. Er ist wohl versorgt und braucht den Zusammenbruch seiner irdischen Hütte nicht zu fürchten.

Freude. Welch eine Freude, wenn jemand aus einer armseligen Hütte in ein schönes Haus einziehen kann! Wieviel mehr freut sich die Seele eines Christen auf ihren Umzug! Aus dieser zerbrechlichen Hütte, wo man so beschwert ist, in kurzem in einen solchen himmlischen Palast versetzt zu werden — welch freudige Aussicht! Wie freut sich ein Wanderer auf seiner mühseligen Reise, wenn er bald an das Ziel kommt! Wie freut sich ein Kind, wenn es aus der Fremde heimkehrt! Die Freude und Hoffnung, die wir Christen haben, läßt uns alles Kreuz, alles Leid dieses Erdenlebens, in Geduld überwinden.

Sehnsucht. R. 7: „Wir wandeln im Glauben und nicht im Schauen.“ Wir haben die himmlische Wohnung noch nicht gesehen. „Es ist noch nicht erschienen, was wir sein werden. Wir wissen aber, wenn es erscheinen wird, daß wir ihm gleich sein werden; denn wir

werden ihn sehen, wie er ist.“ Kein Wunder, wenn man mitunter vor Verlangen brennt. B. 2: „Wir sehnen uns nach unserer Behausung, die vom Himmel ist, und uns verlanget, daß wir damit überkleidet werden.“ „Mein sehnlich Herz so groß Verlangen hat und ist nicht mehr bei mir.“ Unser Wandel ist schon im Himmel. Wir richten unsern Blick hinauf nach oben. B. 8: „Wir haben vielmehr Lust, außer dem Leibe zu wallen und daheim zu sein bei dem HErrn.“ Es gibt eine verkehrte Sterbenslust aus Kreuzesfurcht, Verdruß, Verzweiflung, aber auch eine rechte Sterbensfreudigkeit, die ihre Quelle hat in der Sehnsucht nach Christo, daheim zu sein bei dem HErrn. „O wann werd' ich dahin kommen, daß ich einst mit allen Frommen schau' dein holdes Angesicht?“ „O Ehrenburg, sei nun gegrüßet mir, tu auf die Gnadenpfort'! Wie große Zeit hat mich verlangt nach dir, eh' ich bin kommen fort aus jenem bösen Leben!“ „O schöner Tag und noch viel schönre Stund', wann wirst du kommen schier?“ „Wann schlägt die Stunde? Wann darf ich gehen heim, ach! nur heim?“

Gott schenke uns allen die Gnade, daß unsere Seele, wenn die irdische Hütte zusammenbricht, ihren Einzug hält in das himmlische Paradies!

E. E.

Trinitatissonntag.

1 Petr. 1, 1—9. *)

Mit dem heutigen Fest schließt die Festhälfte des Kirchenjahres. Da erinnern wir uns noch einmal an die großen Taten des dreieinigen Gottes, uns zum Heile geschehen: Weihnachten (Joh. 3, 16; 2 Kor. 8, 9), Karfreitag (2 Kor. 5, 21; Röm. 5, 10), Ostern (Röm. 4, 25; 8, 33. 34; 1 Kor. 15, 55—57), Pfingsten (Apost. 2, 1—41). So sollte denn gewiß an diesem Feste unser Herz und Mund überfließen von Lob und Preis der heiligen Dreieinigkeit.

Ihr Christen, ihr auserwählten Fremdlinge, lobt und preist den dreieinigen Gott!

1. Lobt den Vater, der uns erwählt hat!
2. Lobt den Sohn, der uns durch sein Blut erlöst hat!
3. Lobt den Heiligen Geist, der uns heiligt und zu unserm ewigen Erbteil erhält!

1.

Im Anfang seines Briefes stellt der Apostel Petrus seinen Lesern die heilige Dreieinigkeit vor Augen: Gott den Vater, den er im Unterschied von den beiden andern Personen eben den Vater nennt, den Geist, den er auch den Heiligen Geist und den Geist Gottes nennt (1, 12;

*) S. Stöckhardts I. Petribrief.

4, 14), und Jesum Christum, den Sohn Gottes, aus dem Wesen des Vaters von Ewigkeit geboren. In B. 2 ist Jesus Christus mit dem Geist und Gott dem Vater auf die gleiche Stufe gestellt, und diese sprachliche Gleichsetzung hat das tatsächliche Gleichsein zur Voraussetzung. Der dreieinige Gott war von Anfang an der Gott der Gläubigen, und seit die Apostel von ihrem Herrn den Befehl erhalten hatten, allen Völkern das Evangelium zu predigen und sie im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes zu taufen, und bald darauf diesen Befehl auszuführen begannen, waren die drei Personen der Gottheit das große A und O der apostolischen Verkündigung. Und bis auf den heutigen Tag ist der dreieinige Gott der Gott der Christen, unser Gott, der allein wahre Gott. Und in diesem dreieinigen Gott gründet und wurzelt das Heil der Christen, unser Glaube, unsere Rechtfertigung und Heiligung, gründet sich unsere ewige Erwählung, diese vorzeitliche Quelle und Ursache unsers Heils. Unser Heil ist ein Werk des dreieinigen Gottes, und deshalb loben wir Gott den Vater, Sohn und Heiligen Geist.

Wir Christen sind erwählte Fremdlinge nach der Vergebung Gottes des Vaters. Die Erde ist uns eine Fremde, der Himmel unsere Heimat, der wir entgegenpilgern. Wir Christen sind eine kleine Herde, hin und her in der Welt zerstreut. Aber wie sind wir Fremdlinge und Bürger Gottes geworden? „Erwählte Fremdlinge.“ Gott hat uns erwählt, erkoren. Gott der Vater hat uns erwählt nach seiner Vergebung, nach seinem liebevollen Rat und seinem gnädigen Beschluß. Vor der Zeit der Welt schon hat er uns sich zuerkannt, uns sich ersehen und zu den Seinen gemacht. Daß wir dem Verderben der Welt entnommen und Gottes liebe Kinder sind, das haben wir in keiner Weise irgendwelchem Verdienst und Vorzug unsererseits zuzuschreiben, sondern aus freier Gnade hat Gott von Ewigkeit sein Augenmerk auf uns gerichtet. Und weil unsere Wahl in Gott, in Gottes Rat und Beschluß, begründet ist, ist unsere Erwählung fest und gewiß und kann durch keine List und Macht des Teufels, der Welt oder unsers eigenen Fleisches erschüttert werden. O dankt, preist und lobt Gott den Vater, der sich unser erbarmt und schon von Ewigkeit an uns gedacht und uns zu seinem Volk und zu Schafen seiner Weide erkoren hat!

2.

Doch wie konnte Gott uns gnädig sein? Wir sind arme Sünder wie alle Adamskinder, nichts besser von Natur als andere Menschen. Petrus erwähnt das Blut Christi, unsers Herrn. Christi Blut ist das Blut des Neuen Testaments. Damit ist nicht bloß vorbildlich, sondern wirklich und wahrhaftig die Sünde gesühnt, Gott mit den Sündern versöhnt, und die Auferstehung Christi ist das göttliche Siegel der Versöhnung Gottes mit der Welt, der unumstößliche Beweis, daß Christus den Sündern den Weg ins ewige Leben eröffnet hat. Ohne Christum

und sein stellvertretendes, sündesühnendes Leiden und Sterben und seine siegreiche Auferstehung wären wir noch in unsern Sünden, ohne einen gnädigen Gott und ohne alle Hoffnung in der Welt. Aber Christus ist der Mittler des Heils, 1 Tim. 2, 5. 6. In ihm wurzelt alle Liebe und Gnade Gottes gegen die armen Sünder. Auf Grund des Verdienstes Jesu Christi hat Gott der Vater in Ewigkeit an uns gedacht und uns zu seinen Kindern und zum ewigen Leben erkoren. Und Gott der Vater hat nun von Ewigkeit sich auch vorgesetzt, uns, seine erwählten Fremdlinge, mit dem Blute Christi zu besprengen. So ist es geschehen. Wir Kinder des Neuen Bundes sind mit dem köstlichen Blute des Sohnes Gottes besprengt und gezeichnet. Schon in der Taufe haben wir Christum angezogen, und durch die Predigt des Evangeliums werden wir fort und fort mit dem Blute Christi besprengt, und wir Christen, die dem Evangelium glauben und gehorsam sind, eignen uns das Blut Christi zu, nehmen durch den Glauben Christum an und sein Heil. Wir haben nun Gnade bei Gott, Frieden mit Gott, R. 2. Wir sind wahrhaft mit Gott versöhnt. (Lied 146, 2.)

3.

Den Glaubensgehorsam wirkt Gott der Vater durch seinen Heiligen Geist. Wir sind erwählte Fremdlinge durch die Heiligung des Geistes. In der Zeit hat Gottes Geist uns durch das Wort des Evangeliums und durch die liebe Taufe bekehrt und dadurch geheiligt, dem Wesen der Welt entnommen und Gott geweiht. Da hat Gott und der Vater unsers Herrn Jesu Christi uns durch seinen Geist wiedergeboren, zu ganz neuen Creaturen gemacht mit neuen Kräften, neuem Willen, der nun auf Gott und alles Gute gerichtet ist. Die Bekehrung ist ein Werk des barmherzigen Gottes durch seinen Geist. Weil Gott so reich ist an Barmherzigkeit, hat er uns aus unserm Sündenjammer und -elend herausgerissen, zum Glauben an unsern Heiland gebracht und damit in ein neues, geistliches, göttliches Wesen und Leben versetzt, das allein den Namen Leben verdient.

Wozu hat Gott nach seiner Wahl uns wiedergeboren? Zu einer lebendigen Hoffnung. Das geistliche Leben, das hier unvollkommen ist und bleibt, läuft schließlich aus in das ewige Leben. Unsere Hoffnung ist eine lebendige, eine Hoffnung, die in sich die Kraft und Gewißheit der Verwirklichung trägt und deshalb auch auf uns Christen eine belebende Wirkung ausübt, uns tröstet, stärkt, mutig und herzhast und freudig in Gott macht. Und wie herrlich ist doch diese Hoffnung! Unvergänglich, unzerstörbar, unverweslich; unbesleckt, ganz rein, lauter, von keiner Sünde berührt, und bereitet uns deshalb einen ungetrübbten Genuß ohne allen bitteren Beigeschmack; unverwelflich, „bleibt frisch und grünt ewiglich“. Und es ist ein bleibendes Erbe; es wird uns behalten im Himmel. — Aber werden wir nicht vielleicht des Erbes

verlustig gehen? Petrus gibt uns Sicherheit gegen uns selbst. B. 5. Das Erbe ist uns droben im Himmel aufbewahrt, und wir werden hier auf Erden für das Erbe bewahrt. Derselbe barmherzige Gott und Vater, der uns durch seinen Geist wiedergeboren hat zu einer lebendigen Hoffnung, wird uns auch aus seiner Macht durch seinen Geist im Glauben erhalten und uns so bewahren zur ewigen Seligkeit, die am Tage Jesu Christi offenbar werden wird und in der wir uns dann ewig freuen werden.

Selbst die Leiden dieser Zeit, die mancherlei Anfechtungen, sind in Gottes des Heiligen Geistes Hand ein Mittel zur Reinigung und Stärkung unsers Glaubens, B. 6—9. In aller Not und in allem Kreuz, das wir als Fremdlinge in dieser Welt erfahren, wird der Geist Gottes uns im Glauben und in der Liebe zu Jesu erhalten, so daß wir am Tage der Offenbarung Jesu Christi von unserm geliebten Heilande Lob, Preis und Ehre empfangen und uns in ihm freuen mit unaussprechlicher und herrlicher Freude und das Ende unsers Glaubens davonbringen, nämlich der Seelen Seligkeit. Darum: Lied 144, 4.

B. C. S.

Outlines on the First Series of Gospel-Lessons Chosen by the Synodical Conference.

Sunday Exaudi.

JOHN 7, 37—53.

The unbelievers of our day, as well as those of other times, try to make the world believe that all learning and wisdom is on their side, and that we Christians are ignorant pretenders, knowing not whereof we speak. After all, however, to such arrogant pretension and haughty assumption on the part of unbelievers we may well apply the bitter irony of Job, who said: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you." Job 12, 2. 3. The unbelievers are not only not as learned and wise as they pretend to be, but they are insincere. This we learn from our text.

THE INSINCERITY OF UNBELIEVERS.

Their insincerity is manifested in two ways:—

1. *They condemn the Christian religion without having thoroughly investigated it.*
2. *They refuse to accept the clear testimony of Scripture and the facts resulting therefrom.*

1.

a. The Pharisees and chief priests condemned Christ without having granted Him a fair hearing. This was contrary even to the common practise among men. V. 51; Acts 25, 11. 12; 1 Kings 3, 16. (The trials before the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate were not fair trials, but were simply used as a means to an end.)

b. The Pharisees and chief priests were religious teachers who pretended to teach the Scriptures, but they did not sincerely concern themselves about the claims of Christ, namely, that He in His person and work was fulfilling the Scriptures. Vv. 52. 41. 42. Not to the authority of the Scriptures, but to their own authority did the chief priests and Pharisees ask the people to submit. Vv. 47. 48; Matt. 23, 13—34; Jer. 23, 31. 32.

Many outside of the Church condemn Christianity, although they are ignorant of the teachings of the Bible and do not go to the trouble to read and study it. Also to-day there is "a division among the people because of Him," v. 43; and especially do we find that even now religious teachers speak "with authority," although they know not what the Bible teaches.

2.

a. Christ referred His hearers to the Scriptures. a. In the Scriptures of the Old Testament He was promised as the Savior. Vv. 37. 38. 42. b. What had been promised of Christ was being fulfilled when He came into this world, performed His miracles, taught, suffered, died, and rose again. Vv. 42. 46; John 12, 44—50.

b. The Scriptures speak clearly; every one who hears may understand. V. 42; Ps. 119, 105; John 5, 39.

c. Not lack of evidence, but unbelief keeps many people from accepting what the Scriptures clearly teach, and from admitting the facts which result therefrom (Christ's life upon earth, the good influence of Christianity in this world, and the experience of every Christian). V. 47. The Jews, especially their religious teachers, misinterpreted the Scriptures, and especially the Messianic prophecies, and would not believe that Christ had been sent by God. John 6, 15; 8, 45. 49. 50; 5, 47; 10, 37. 38. Later teachers did likewise; they perverted the words of God's revelation. 2 Pet. 3, 16.

Even so to-day. Modern liberalists will not accept the clear statements of the Scriptures, but use the words in an entirely different sense; and in using also the terminology of the Christian Church in a different sense, they have broken with historic Christianity.

Let us not be deceived by the so-called wisdom and learning of unbelievers. Let us not drink the polluted waters which they offer us, but rather drink from the Fountain which refreshes us with the water of life. V. 37.

J. H. C. F.

Pentecost.

JOHN 14, 15—22.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost?" Acts 19, 2. The Holy Spirit a necessary gift. A gift; v. 16, "give." Necessary; for he that knows Him not, and in whom He does not dwell, is of the world. V. 17. Nor does Christ manifest Himself unto such as are of the world. V. 22. The world is in spiritual darkness and gropes about in its blindness without the Spirit. The world may possess civilization, education, genius, culture, and still be rotten to the core; a man may be an educated villain and a depraved genius. The world might as well attempt to hew marble without tools, or paint without colors or instruments, or build without materials, as perform any acceptable service without the graces of the Spirit of God. All the good the children of this world do is as worthless as the motions of a galvanized corpse.

The Holy Ghost is also a precious Gift. He is our Comforter and guides us into all truth. Hence,—

THE HOLY GHOST A PRECIOUS GIFT.

1. *He is the Comforter;* 2. *He is the Spirit of Truth.*

1.

Gloom and sorrow had taken hold of the disciples. John 16, 6. A betrayer in their midst. John 13, 26. The early departure of the dear Savior had been announced. John 13, 33. But the cheering promise, v. 18: "comfortless," *lit.*, orphans. Also v. 19 and John 16, 16. As "little children" He had addressed them, and for them it would be a calamity to be left orphans.

The Savior's promise rings out in still sweeter tones. V. 16. His presence after His return from the grave lasted but forty days. Precious days, but far too few. This other Comforter should abide forever, *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Never shall they be without His aid.

He will not be a stranger, to whom they would have to become accustomed; for He was another (*ἄλλος*), but not a different (*ἕτερος*) Comforter. (Regarding the former term compare John 5, 32; 10, 16; 18, 15; 1 Cor. 3, 10; regarding the latter term, Acts 2, 4; Rom. 2, 1; 7, 23.) From this other Comforter they could expect as much as from their kind and merciful Savior. The Holy Ghost is God together with the Father and the Son.

The relation of the Spirit to the disciples should be most intimate. According to v. 16, "with you" (*μετά*), *i. e.*, in fellowship; according to v. 17, "with you" or by you (*παρά*), *i. e.*, as to His personal presence (therefore "dwelleth"); and in you (*ἐν*), "as an indwelling personal energy, at the springs of the life." Temples of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. 3, 16; Eph. 2, 22. Eve was flesh of flesh and bone

of bones of Adam; Christ's disciples, of God, Eph. 5, 30. "Great mystery," Eph. 5, 32, *unio mystica*. Hos. 2, 19, 20; John 14, 23; 15, 5. Father, Son, and Spirit dwell in His disciples.

The gift of the Spirit a most precious gift because He is the Comforter, *παράκλητος*, "one who is called to another's side to aid him, as an advocate in a court of justice." The disciples sorely in need of such a counsel after the Savior's ascension. They were to be His witnesses (John 16, 27; Acts 1, 8; 2, 32; 3, 15, etc.), in a world of enemies set like flint against Christ. John 15, 18, 20. The danger pointed out and the aid promised already Matt. 10, 16—20. The Spirit would give them utterance. Acts 2, 4. He would counsel them in days of sore trials. He would convict their adversary, the world, with regard to sin, justice, and judgment. John 16, 8—11. Because He is a Comforter, as Jesus had been to them, He would plead their cause with the Father. 1 John 2, 1; Rom. 8, 26. Note the fiery zeal and intrepidity of these lambs after the outpouring of the Spirit!

This gift is certain. Jesus will pray (*ἐρωτήσω*) the Father for it. V. 16. „*Ἐρωτάω* is to ask on equal terms and hence is always used by Christ of His own asking from the Father, in the consciousness of His equal dignity." Jesus will send Him. John 15, 26. The Holy Spirit is the most precious fruit of His redemption. John 16, 7.

(In the application the pastor should not fail to point to the great excellency of this gift as possessed and enjoyed by Christians to-day. Compare *Hom. Mag.* 35, 161.)

2.

The Holy Ghost is a precious gift also because He is described as the Spirit of Truth.

He is the Spirit of Truth because He is God, whose Word is the truth and lays bare all lies and falsehoods of men, all of whom are liars. The wisdom of this world in all spiritual matters is utter folly and perversion, and even in the matters that are within the boundaries of human observation, inspection, and investigation man is constantly fumbling, mumbling, and stumbling. Truth, absolute truth, in all matters proceeds from God alone.

But Jesus here calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Truth because He was to lead the disciples into all truth. John 15, 26; 16, 13. The prime office of the Spirit of Truth is to bear witness of Christ. Human research and reflection lead man to see in Christ Elias or some other great prophet, Matt. 16, 13, 14; and the world does not know Christ, John 16, 3; but the confession: "Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," is not revealed by flesh and blood, Gal. 1, 11, 12. The Holy Ghost, whom the Christians receive by the preaching of faith, sets forth the Crucified before our eyes. Gal. 3, 1, 2; 1 Cor. 12, 3. The Holy Spirit unfolds the pages of the whole Bible to us

and teaches us to find Jesus in the whole Bible. As He convicts the world of the blackest of all sins, rejection of Jesus Christ by not believing in Him, so He proves to us, and convinces us of, the divine origin and heavenly truth of the Gospel. He is heaven's oxygen for the smoking flax of our faith. Text, vv. 19—21. Believers know and love Jesus. Thus we become divinely certain of our salvation, so certain that we tremble not when Satan and our conscience accuse us, or when the Law condemns us. We would even pronounce a curse upon an angel of heaven who would dare preach a Christ different from the Christ of the Bible. Gal. 1, 8. 9. The Holy Spirit makes us certain that every word of the Bible is truth.

Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2, 245, quotes Bengel thus on the appellation "Spirit of Truth": "A most exquisite title. . . . The Spirit, who has the truth, reveals it by knowledge in the understanding; confers it by practical proof and taste (*Waehlen*) in the will; testifies of it to others also through those to whom He has revealed it; and defends that truth, of which John 1, 17 speaks, 'grace and truth.' . . . The truth makes all our virtues true. Otherwise there is a kind of false knowledge, false faith, false hope, false love; but there is no such thing as false truth."

What a precious gift! In this world of sin and folly, fraud and deception, how blessed we are to be led into all truth by God Himself! Pray for that power-clad Messenger of the Redeemer. The answer to your prayer is certain. Luke 11, 13. Without Him we can do nothing, but filled with the Holy Ghost, we shall have counsel and the truth.

O. C. A. B.

Pentecost Monday.

LUKE 9, 51—56.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matt. 12, 34. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Prov. 4, 23. In these passages the Bible teaches that the words and actions of a man are directed by the spirit which dwells in him. History and experience both confirm this truth. Cain killed Abel, but before he killed him, an evil spirit had taken possession of him, a murderous spirit of jealousy, of bitterness and hatred. Saul left the Lord, visited a fortune-teller, and then perished in his despair. What was it that drove him on upon his career of sin and ruin? An evil spirit had taken possession of him and impelled him on. Peter was warned by Jesus that the Evil Spirit was desirous to possess him, but Peter despised the warning, and thus it happened that Satan gained an advantage over him. So it was with Judas. — On the other hand, we are told that all good, God-pleasing words and actions which are manifest in the lives of Christians are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in them. Gal. 5, 22. 23. Men ought

therefore to watch over themselves and examine themselves to note which spirit is directing their words and actions. In our text we note different persons influenced by different spirits. According to these, let us examine ourselves and ask:—

WHAT SPIRIT MOVES US?

1. *Is it the spirit of hatred toward Christ?*
2. *Is it the spirit of murderous persecution?*
3. *Or is it the spirit of merciful love?*

1.

a. Text. The Samaritans would not receive Jesus *because* "His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem." Behold the spirit of clannishness and hatred! The Samaritans hated the Jews and the Jewish capital, Jerusalem. It is true, the Jews had provoked them. (History of this antagonism.) But whatever the provocation, an unforgiving spirit of hatred and of bitterness is the spirit of Satan. And this spirit made them hateful and bitter even against Jesus, their best Friend. This was the very same spirit which lived in, and moved, the chief priests and the Pharisees against our Savior. John 8, 44.

b. This is the very same spirit which "now worketh in the children of disobedience." If you are not of their class or lodge or company, men of this world will ostracize, persecute, and spitefully entreat you. They hate consistent Christians; they hate the Lord and Master of the Christians, Jesus Christ. Enmity against Christ is the spirit of the world. John 15, 19. Whatever the protestations of the world may be, actions speak louder than words. "We will not have this man to reign over us." Luke 19, 14.

Satan still tries to breathe into us also such a spirit of hatred and enmity. It may begin with ill will toward some neighbor or brother, but the spark will soon set the whole heart ablaze with bitterness, which finally rebels against Christ Himself. Let us be on our guard and ask God to quench the sin in us in its very beginning!

2.

a. Text. When the disciples of Jesus, James and John, experienced this hateful behavior of the Samaritans, they were filled with indignation. As they related to the Lord how the Samaritans had treated His polite request, they asked permission to command fire to come down from heaven and consume these Samaritans. They wished to strike down these people in their sins and have them perish for time and eternity. These sentiments came from Satan. True, they quote for themselves the example of Elias. True, they were provoked by the hateful spirit and sinful obstinacy of the Samaritans. But the sin which we find in this world never excuses our own sin. It

might appear that their feeling of indignation arose from their entire devotion to the Lord Jesus, but, after all, it was no more a godly spirit than that spirit which moved Peter to draw his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. It was a murderous spirit. It was personal pique and resentment because they and their company were not honored.

Note well that these disciples were not so filled with the Holy Spirit that there was no more sin in them. Again and again we find that sinful emotions, fanned by the spirit of the Old Serpent, still were active even in these sincere Christians and disciples of Jesus. It was the Evil Spirit which moved them at times to be jealous one of the other. Mark 9, 34. It was that satanic spirit which moved Peter and others to make an attempt to persuade the Lord not to suffer. Luke 16, 23.

b. We find this same spirit active among men to-day, and it is the more dangerous because it hides behind the name and appearance of virtues. How often, even in Christians, we find carnal zeal, which is not according to God's will! Whoever is guided by a mere appearance of godliness, by mere phrases of godly sound and by examples of other Christian men, may be misled. Even great and godly saints have stumbled and fallen, made mistakes, and done wickedly. Not the example of the saints, not the fine-sounding phrases of fanatics, but the Word of God is to be our guide; for in the Word of God dwells the Spirit of God.

Those who would insert the name "Christian" into our national Constitution; those who insist on national prohibition upon religious grounds; those who would unite the churches outwardly without regard to unity of faith; those who would tolerate false teachers in Christian pulpits; those who would carry on war for the sake of having Christ's kingdom come; and those who are pacifists because they imagine that Christ's kingdom cannot come otherwise,—all these dress their theories, philosophies, and fancies in godly language, quote the examples of great saints, and otherwise give themselves the appearance of being influenced only by zeal for the glory of the Savior. But, after all, their zeal is carnal, the spirit which moves them is an evil spirit; and even though some of them are true Christians, if they speak, write, and work for that which is contrary to the will of God, then Satan is moving them in these their endeavors.

Let us ever be on our guard! Even in Christians sinful and foolish thoughts and desires may arise, and Satan may fan these. It has happened that in this way faithful men have turned fanatics and become murderous persecutors. Let us ever measure all our thoughts, words, and deeds by the infallible Word of God; for in no other way may we be sure that the Holy Spirit is moving us.

3.

a. Text. Jesus was not at all deceived by the false zeal of the disciples, nor was He moved to bitterness by the sin of the Samaritans. We are told He rebuked His disciples: "Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of." He meant to say, Such utterances coming from you do not arise in you because you are My disciples, but they come from another spirit, from an evil spirit. He is not deceived by the mention of the name of Elias and by having the severity and justice of the Old Testament quoted. True, he does not approve of the behavior of the Samaritans, but (always just like Himself) He gives utterance to the Spirit which lived in Him: "For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." V. 56. Thus Jesus was not moved by sin and wickedness, by opposition and bitterness, to adopt the same behavior. Let the filth of the world and the fire of Satan do their worst, He remained holy, pure, sinless. What did He not suffer upon the cross, and yet He prayed for His foes: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The spirit of Christ is a forgiving spirit of mercy, which seeks man's life and salvation.

b. That is the Spirit which is from above. That is the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, who moved the apostles, martyrs, and Christians of all ages to testify, to suffer, to seek the lost, to show mercy, and to endure unto the end. That is the Spirit which still is active in the Word of God. —

Let us pray God for this Spirit; and may He fill us and produce in us His own fruits! Hymn 247, 1. 4. S.

Trinity Sunday.

MATT. 3, 13—17.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee." V. 13. The rumors of the mighty works of John the Baptist had reached the carpenter-shop at Nazareth. Jesus knew: Is. 42, 3; Mal. 3, 1; Luke 1, 76 ff. The momentous hour had come. Eventful days. See v. 1 ff.; Mark 1, 1 ff.; Luke 3, 1 ff.; John 1, 15 ff. Jesus was now to be anointed for His holy office as the Christ, the Messiah. At this solemn occasion the great God revealed Himself as the Triune God, yea, as our Savior. Let us contemplate this marvelous revelation of

THE TRIUNE GOD — OUR SAVIOR.

1. God reveals Himself as the Triune God.
2. This God reveals Himself as our Savior.

1.

a. *The trinity of persons in the Godhead.* — From the very beginning God revealed Himself as consisting of a plurality of persons. The Hebrew form of the word for God, Gen. 1, 1, is in the plural.

Note plural in Gen. 1, 26, 27; 3, 22; 11, 7; Ps. 2, 7. — God reveals Himself as being three conscious persons, each one different from the other two, *e. g.*, "God the Creator," "the Word," the "Spirit of God." Gen. 1; John 1; Num. 6, 24ff. Note Is. 6, 3; 42, 1; 48, 12, 13, 16: "I am He," "the Lord God," and "His Spirit." John 14, 15—17; 15, 26; 16, 7; 2 Cor. 13, 14; 1 John 5, 7. Text.

These three persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Text. "Abi ad Jordanem et discite Trinitatem." Matt. 28, 19.

God the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our true Father. V. 17; Luke 9, 35; John 12, 27f.; Ps. 2, 7; Is. 42, 1; John 3, 35; 20, 17.

God the Son. He is spoken of in the Old Testament as "the Lord," "Jehovah." Ex. 3, 2: "The Angel of the Lord"; v. 4: "The Lord saw," "God called." Jer. 23, 6. It is the "Word" made flesh, John 1, "Christ the Lord," Luke 2, 11, standing in the Jordan, of whom the Father says: "This is My beloved Son." Matt. 3, 17. Thomas: John 20, 28; Rom. 9, 5; 1 John 5, 10, 13, 20. (Luther III, 1931.)

God the Holy Ghost. A distinct Person, different from the Father and from the Son. Text, v. 16. Cp. Luke 3, 21: "bodily shape." Acts 5, 3, 4; 1 Cor. 3, 16; Acts 28, 25 f. Omnipresence, Ps. 139; omniscience, 1 Cor. 2, 10; divine works: creation, Gen. 1; Job 33, 4; inspiration 2 Pet. 1, 21; sanctification. Coordinated with the Father and with the Son, Matt. 28, 19; 2 Cor. 13, 14. Trinity of persons.

b. *Unity of essence.* The text does not teach polytheism, pantheism, dualism, Manichaeism, "trinitheism," but trinitarianism, a Triune God. Deut. 6, 4; Is. 6, 3: "Holy, holy, holy" [trinity] "is *the Lord* of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory [unity]." 1 Cor. 8, 4. God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are not three gods, but one God.

c. This Triune God has revealed Himself as *the only God*, that He might be feared, loved, and trusted in by all mankind. He is not a tribal god, not a god of the Christians only, but He is the Lord God of heaven and earth. First Commandment. Hos. 13, 14; Is. 42, 8; 44, 6; 45, 5, 21; Ps. 67, 8; 84, 8; 100, 3; Rom. 3, 29, 30; Rev. 1, 8.

2.

The gracious revelation spoken of in the text at that particular time God evidently made for a purpose. We are chiefly concerned in the great blessing which flows, and should flow, toward us from this manifestation of God's glory. The Triune God testifies that *He is God, our Savior.*

a. Jesus, by His baptism, was publicly christened, anointed, into His Messianic office. "Jesus here begins rightly to be the Christ." (Luther.) God here presents His Son in a most solemn manner to all mankind as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, John 1, 29ff., as the world's only Savior. Jesus offers and consecrates Himself to His holy office with the words: "*Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*" John baptized those who came to him, confessing their sins. V. 6; Mark 1, 5. Jesus was the Sinless One (v. 14), yet the great Sin-bearer. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He shall bear their iniquities." Is. 53, 6. 11. Our sins became His sins. Ps. 69, 5; 40, 12, for: 2 Cor. 5, 21. By His active and passive obedience He was to work out the world's salvation and procure for every sinner a perfect righteousness. Rom. 3, 22ff.

b. Yet the work of salvation, of fulfilling all righteousness, was not the exclusive work of Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, but the work of the Triune God. The three persons of the Godhead created the heaven and the earth. Gen. 1. The Father with His omnipotence created the world, likewise the Son with His omnipotence, and likewise the Holy Ghost with His omnipotence; yet there were not three creations, but one work of creation, and not three omnipotences were employed, but only one divine omnipotence. The same is the case with all the works and attributes of God. The salvation of the world, therefore, for which the Word was made flesh, and for which He was publicly ordained at Jordan, was the work of the Triune God. "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2, 9. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5, 19. Cf. John 5, 19. Jesus, therefore, speaks in the plural: "Thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness." V. 15. Cp. "us" in Gen. 1, 26f; 3, 22; 11, 7. God set His seal to the truth that the great God Himself fulfils all our righteousness, that He is the world's Savior, by revealing His glory as the adorable Triune God. Vv. 16. 17. The Triune God our Savior. Is. 43, 3; 45, 15; Hos. 13, 4; 1 Tim. 1, 1; 2, 3; Jude 25. (Luther III, 1919; XIII, 2692. 2696.)

Conclusion. — Since there is only one God, the Triune God, we know that this is the God whose wrath we have deserved on account of our sins. Ps. 51, 4. The demands of His Law must be fulfilled, however. His divine justice must be satisfied. Before His judgment-bar we must appear. Since He Himself, however, is our Savior and Redeemer, who was in Christ and reconciled the world to Himself, we are assured that no power in heaven, earth, and hell can pluck us out of His hands. The Triune God is our Savior. Let us give unto Him our heart, our service, our life.

First Sunday after Trinity.

MATT. 19, 16—26.

I lack nothing: smug self-complacency and conceit of perfectionists, theoretical and practical. Theoretical: The Pharisee. Luke 18. Two examples from the Talmud: 1. Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, whose worthiness was so great that no rainbow was needed during his life to insure immunity from a deluge! 2. Rabbi Simon claimed that, if Abraham had redeemed all generations to that of his own, he could, by his own merits, redeem all the rest to the end of the world! — To-day; Roman Catholic works of supererogation; Methodists, Salvation Army, who teach that a believer can attain perfection on earth. But: 2 Cor. 4, 16; Eph. 4, 15; Jas. 3, 2; Prov. 20, 9; 1 John 1, 8. 9. — Practical: Many without and within the Church. They live a smug, self-righteous life, as if God were fully satisfied with their spiritual state; they make no efforts to grow in holiness.

Still, there are more who are troubled by their conscience, who feel and realize that they are by no means perfect, that they lack much. The Christian, the believer, realizes this even more than others. He, too, is moved to ask, —

WHAT LACK I YET?

The answer is: —

1. *Denial of self;*
2. *Devotion to Jesus.*

1.

A. Explication, vv. 16—22. — a. The young ruler lacked knowledge: *a. of God.* Vv. 16. 17. He came running to Jesus, knelt down. See Mark 10; Luke 18. He addressed Jesus as 'good Master.' Like Nicodemus, he regards Jesus only as a teacher come from God. Jesus gently corrects him. V. 17. He does not deny the propriety of the epithet, but declines to receive it in the wrong sense. If His deity is implied, it is correct; if not, He will not approve it. The ruler ignores the correction. He will not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, Jehovah. His unbelief apparent when he goes away and prefers his possessions.

b. Knowledge of the Law. Vv. 17b—20. A ruler, versed in the Law. Yet Jesus must tell him what to do; nay, He must show him that he cannot fulfil the Law. Bengel: Jesus refers secure sinners to the Law; the contrite He consoles with the Gospel. Vv. 18. 19: not the first, but the second table. Transgressions more patent. For this reason Fourth Commandment last; applies peculiarly to youth. Finally, v. 19b. Christ sums up. This alone enough to prove violation. — Yet the youth answers: v. 20. Hence, Jesus does not argue

the matter; He shows him what he lacks. He loves his possessions, money, more than God, more than his neighbor.

c. Knowledge of *himself*. He considers himself able to fulfil the Law, to merit eternal life by his works. He does not know that his nature is corrupt (original sin), that he cannot please God, cannot atone for his sins, that he can be saved only by God's grace, through faith. He will not take his reason captive, not acknowledge his ignorance in things spiritual. This he lacks: true knowledge of God, of sin, of himself. Vv. 24—26.

b. He lacked the will to surrender all for Christ. Vv. 21. 22. Jesus put him to the test. He commanded him to sell all his property and give the proceeds to the poor. He must sacrifice all his temporal possessions. But he refused to give up his estate with its comforts and luxuries. Christ promised him greater, lasting treasures in heaven. But he would not trust the promise. He was attached to the things of this world, loved them more than Christ. Christ's command the losing of his life. Cf. Matt. 10, 39; John 12, 25. — How much this youth yet lacked!

B. Application. — a. In general. What does the unbeliever lack? A sincere confession of ignorance in spiritual matters, of God, of himself, of the Law, of the way to heaven. Heathen, Jew, Moham-medan, Mason: conceited, they will not acknowledge their error. — The unbeliever will not do God's will; he will not repent of his sin and believe in Jesus Christ. It would involve sacrifice of many things — past relations, comforts, influence, pleasure. These he will not give up. Cf. vv. 24—26a. Wealth to him is not an advantage, but a real hindrance.

b. In particular. What do *we* lack? Do we always submit to the inspired Word? Our flesh is inclined to doubt, question, the true meaning and the validity of this or that statement or commandment. Especially true when it applies to our own peculiar circumstances, when we are called on to make some sacrifice for the kingdom of God — support of congregation, missions, colleges; alms. Then we are inclined to hesitate, refuse. Our old Adam clings to material things. We do not want to deny ourselves, etc. — How many have permitted their riches to choke their faith, have gone to hell on account of their wealth! Are we watching and praying? Are we single-minded?

2.

A. Absolute confidence in Christ. — a. The fact. a. The rich young man. He seeks eternal life, V. 16. He thinks he can merit it by works. Jesus shows him that he cannot. He promises him treasures in heaven if he will divest himself of all earthly possessions in order that he might follow Him. V. 21. He must become Christ's disciple, impose implicit confidence in Him. Christ requires the re-

lation God demands of man. He is God. V. 17; John 3; chap. 8; 14, 6. The ruler lacked this. — *b.* All men. Absolute faith in Christ demanded. No divided trust. Not Christ and some one or something else, but Christ only and alone, always, in life and death. — Have you this faith? at all times? under all circumstances? No; you still lack perfect faith.

b. The attainment. Vv. 25, 26. Disciples perplexed, astounded. Who, then, can be saved? Jesus gazed upon them in surprise and pity. Then He said: "With man . . . possible." Man cannot save himself. Wealth, high station in life, power, knowledge, are not means of grace, do not promote spirituality; nay, they are rather obstacles. But God can do, does, the impossible. God can create such confidence, faith. Cf. John 3, 5; Rom. 6, 23; Eph. 2, 8; 2 Tim. 1, 9.

B. Following Jesus. V. 21b. — *a.* The call. *a.* Physical fellowship. Christ commanded the ruler to follow him. He was to do what the apostles had done, *i. e.*, forsake everything and follow Jesus. A potential apostle? to take Judas's place? But the ruler went away sorrowful. He would not devote himself wholly to Jesus. — This call extended to others: "Come; I need you now. Be a minister, a missionary." Many decline. They will not consecrate their lives to direct Christian service. They do not love Jesus enough for that. Parents refuse to give up their sons. There is more money in business, etc. Do you lack this devotion?

b. Spiritual fellowship. *aa.* In general. The call to follow Jesus spiritually extended to all. Vv. 23, 24. Christ generalizes. The particular case induces Him to make a general application. The disciples asked, "Who, then, can be saved?" Answer now: Not special, but general service, salvation. Cf. Matt. 16, 24; Luke 9, 23, 24; 14, 26—33. Following Christ: perfect submission to God's will, holiness, serving God and man, suffering and sacrifice for the truth. — We are willing to follow; but how much we still lack! *bb.* In particular. Consecration and surrender of wealth and material possessions to Christ and His kingdom. The readiness to give up cheerfully as much as He requires, even all if He demands it. Are you ready to do this?

b. Ability to obey the call. This, too, impossible with man. V. 26. Our old Adam still clings to material things. But with God all things are possible. God will work in and through us by His almighty grace. Cf. Phil. 2, 12, 13; 2 Cor. 3, 5; 1 Cor. 15, 10.

How much we yet lack! Let us follow Jesus in self-denial and devotion and learn from Him. But in doing so, let us bear in mind: 1. We are only doing our duty. 2. Our sufficiency, ability, is of God. And then let us not ask like Peter: v. 27. God will surely reward us. He will give us treasures in heaven, but only as rewards of His grace.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

JOHN 8, 1—11.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19, 10; cp. Matt. 18, 11. In these words the Lord Himself states the purpose of His coming into this world, the object of His life on earth, of His Messianic work. The case of Zacchaeus, of the woman who was a sinner. Luke 7, 39—50. Cp. also Matt. 9, 13; Mark 2, 17. Peter in his fall and repentance.

One of the most impressive examples of Christ's love for sinners is that related in our text, where He dealt with the woman taken in adultery. The lesson of this story deserves to be emphasized most strongly. Let us therefore direct our attention to —

THE WORDS OF OUR SAVIOR: "NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE."

Let us consider

1. *The circumstances under which these words were spoken;*
2. *Their full significance and application.*

1.

a. The setting of the story and the accusation. Time: Last year of Christ's ministry, when hatred and persecution of Jewish leaders had reached white heat. After Feast of Tabernacles. John 7. Jesus had very likely spent the night in Bethany, at the home of His friends. — Jesus engaged in the work of His prophetic office when the interruption came: He was teaching the people, telling them the words and the way of salvation. — The accusers: the scribes and Pharisees, whose object was not so much the punishment of an offense as the venting of their spite against Christ. The case itself very clear, a flagrant offense.

b. The Old Testament basis of their charge and its point. The Law of Moses very severe in the case of transgressions of this nature. Cp. Lev. 20, 10; Deut. 22, 22, 23; Lev. 21, 9; Ezek. 16, 38, 40. — The contrast between Old Testament teaching and the message of Jesus implied.

c. The attitude of Jesus. Stooping down, He wrote on the ground. The matter was not under His jurisdiction. Since they did not take the hint, He reproves them with a searching question. — The effect which His words had upon the accusers. The manner in which Jesus applies their manner of acting is a very effective reproof of the woman also, in order that she might have the proper conception of the greatness of her sin. — And yet the words are full of wonderful Gospel beauty.

2.

a. Over against the smug self-righteousness of scribes and Pharisees. No specific accusation. The term "without sin" aroused their conscience, wrought in them the realization of their sinfulness, caused them to slink away before the searching earnestness of the Lord. "From the eldest even unto the last," — unable to brazen it out before Him who searches minds and hearts and might easily have told each and every one of them their particular transgressions, as bad as those of which the woman stood accused.

b. With the background of His mediatorial sacrifice. Jesus most truly angry and provoked at the sin, but His Savior's heart was overflowing with mercy and love for the sinner. The absolution in His words granted on the basis of His perfect atonement, the fact that He had come into the world to pay the guilt also of this particular transgression. — His right of absolution absolute, since every sin, in its final analysis, directed against Him. "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins."

c. Look forward to a change of life based on faith. Jesus adds, "Go and sin no more." He does not underestimate or overlook sin at any time. As the righteous Son of God, as the holy God Himself, He is bound to act with the greatest severity when a sinner obstinately perseveres in his sin. He who sins after receiving the merciful promise of the redemption through the merits of Jesus, wilfully spurning the grace of God, has only Himself to blame if the time of grace is brought to a sudden close. — This story teaches, in a most effective manner, the necessity of practising merciful charity toward the fallen sinner in order to win him back, if possible, to the ways of righteousness.

P. E. K.

Wie steht es mit unserer Niederwahl?

Es war der Konferenzgottesdienst. Zwei der Brüder hatten sich unvermeidlicherweise ein wenig verspätet. Das brausende Vorspiel war zu Ende. Die Gemeinde setzte eben mit der ersten Strophe des ersten Liedes ein, als genannte Zwei eilend beim Kirchgebäude anlangten. „Schön stereotyp“, meinte der eine, der gleich bei der zweiten Silbe das Anfangslied erkannt hatte. „Und“, so fügte er gleich hinzu, „schön stereotyp wird wohl die ganze Auswahl der Lieder heute abend sein. Dies ist Nr. 178. Dem wird wahrscheinlich Nr. 4 folgen, dann Nr. 174 und zum Schluß etwa der letzte Vers von Nr. 2.“ Sie traten ein. Ein Blick auf die Liedertafel zeigte gleich, wie gut der Bruder geraten hatte.

Spät nachts im Quartier fragte sein Begleiter, wie es kam, daß jener so schnell und bestimmt Liedernummern angeben konnte, ohne Text, Thema und etwaige Eigenarten des Konferenzpredigers vorher

gewußt zu haben. „Die Sache ist sehr einfach“, meinte der erste. Und dann erklärte er, daß viele, sehr viele unserer Pastoren überhaupt gar nicht Lieder wähl^en, sondern kurzerhand zum ersten besten greifen, wie man im Englischen sagt: „follow the lines of least resistance“. Die Lieder sind für sie bloß so eine Art Lückenbüßer, die mehrere Pausen zwischen Schriftlektion, Gebeten und Predigt ausfüllen. Und je allgemeiner der Inhalt, desto besser passen ihnen gewisse Lieder für allerlei Gelegenheiten. So gewöhnt man sich leicht an diesen oder jenen Zyklus, den man mit sehr wenig Variation bei Konferenzgottesdiensten, Missionsfesten und ähnlichen Gelegenheiten immer wieder singen läßt. Die Nummern 178, 4, 174, 2 bilden so einen „least-resistance“-Zyklus. Ein anderer wäre z. B. 10, 344, 175, 178, B. 10. Langjährige Beobachtung habe es ihm, so erklärte jener, klargemacht, daß viele Prediger in solch engen Zyklen sich bewegen. Wenn das erste Lied angestimmt sei, könne er oft ganz leicht, ohne auf die Liedertafel zu schauen, ahnen, was dann weiter komme.

Obige Darstellung ist nicht fingiert. Die Geschichte hat sich wirklich zugetragen, wiewohl selbstverständlich Namen, Daten und dgl. hier verschwiegen bleiben. Die Katechunst jenes Bruders ist auch, genauer betrachtet, durchaus nicht so erstaunlich. Wie leicht nehmen wir es doch vielfach mit unserer Liederwahl! Wenn auch die Predigt längst zuvor ausgedacht ist und mit viel Sorgfalt ausgearbeitet wurde, die Lieder wirft man im lektmöglichen Augenblick schnell zusammen. Das war selbst in vergangenen Jahren so, als unsere Kirche ganz deutsch war und dem Pastor auch mehr Zeit zur Vorbereitung auf den Gottesdienst zur Verfügung stand. Heute aber, bei der schwindenden Kenntnis der deutschen Sprache und des deutschen Gesangbuches, zudem bei der größeren Vielgeschäftigkeit der allermeisten Pastoren, ist dies in erhöhtem Maße der Fall. Die Leichtfertigkeit (das Wort ist nicht zu stark), mit der man so oft den Liederzettel ausfertigt, ist erstaunlich, und die weitverbreitete und immer mehr zunehmende Unkenntnis des gediegenen Gesangbuchsinhalts ist recht unerfreulich. Unser Gesangbuch hat sein diamantenes Jubiläum hinter sich. Da sollte es doch denen von uns, die im deutschen Gottesdienst von Kindheit an daraus mitgesungen haben (und das sind immer noch weitaus die meisten in unserm Ministerium), immer bek^ann^ter geworden sein. Und wenn wir uns nun nicht nur auf die Predigt, sondern überhaupt auf den Gottesdienst vorbereiten, wenn wir bei der Liederwahl ebenso umsichtig zu Werke gehen wie z. B. bei der Wahl der Bibelzitate für die Predigt, dann werden wir nie mit diesem oder jenem stereotypen Liederzyklus zufrieden sein. Ja, wenn wir durch sorgfältige Liederwahl den Gottesdienst für unsere Zuhörer recht inhaltreich machen, dann werden wir jedesmal finden, daß er auch auf uns selber höchst erbaulich wirkt. Denken wir ja nicht, daß man das nicht merkt und würdigt, wenn die Liederwahl eine sorgfältig durchdachte ist! Man merkt es wohl, und es

trägt seine Früchte. Der Organist merkt es, und — er spielt mehr mit Sinn und Ausdruck und Gefühl. Der Zuhörer merkt es, und — er singt mit größerer Andacht und Aufmerksamkeit. Wenn dann Text, Thema, Antiphonen, Gebete und Lieder vor und nach der Predigt und zuletzt auch noch der Schlußvers alle dieselbe große, heilige Wahrheit, den einen Grundgedanken des betreffenden Gottesdienstes, an den Mann gebracht haben, dann muß ja der Zuhörer recht überwältigend „von Gott gelehrt“ und mit vollem Segen nach Hause gehen.

Jeder Gottesdienst sollte ein einheitliches Ganzes bilden. In den meisten Fällen wird sich das auch ganz schön so einrichten lassen. Das Zentrum ist das Thema der Predigt. Schon das Eingangslied sollte irgendwie auf das jedesmalige Thema hindeuten. Das mancherorts konstante Nr. 1 ist, wie alles Stereotype, vom übel. Höchstens könnte der erste Vers von Nr. 1 als Stück der Liturgie stehenbleiben; denn in der Liturgie hat man es mit manchen stereotypen Dingen zu tun. (So ist auch Nr. 209 bei uns wesentlich Stück der Abendmahlsliturgie.) Wer nun den Gottesdienst ewig mit demselben (oder doch so ziemlich demselben) Liede beginnen läßt, der wird damit nur den chronisch Spätkommenden und denen, die gerne vor der Kirchthür noch ein Weilchen plaudern, ein sanftes Ruhekissen unterstieben. Man lasse seine Zuhörer merken, daß der Gottesdienst wirklich und sachlich gleich mit dem ersten Lied beginnt! Im zweiten Lied („Hauptlied“) sollte das Predigtthema stark und, wo möglich, wiederholt und vielseitig hervortreten.

An dritter Stelle (wir reden hier vom vormittäglichen Gottesdienst mit seinen fünf Liedern) steht bei uns gewöhnlich „der Glaube“. Hier wird mancherorts konstanterweise zwischen 183 und 184 abgewechselt. Erhebender für den Gottesdienst ist es, wenn man auch bei der Wahl des dritten Liedes mehr unumschränkt sein kann. Es gibt eine ganze Anzahl Gesangbuchlieder, die ein trinitarisches Bekenntnis enthalten, die auch dem Thema dieses oder jenes Gottesdienstes mehr gerecht werden. Beispiele: Nr. 143 (Licht des göttlichen Wortes), Nr. 146 (die großen Heilstaten unsers Gottes — Christi Verdienst — Wiedergeburt — Zukunft zum Gericht), Nr. 6, 12—16 (Kirchengehen — Ostern — Sonntag u. a.), Nr. 122, 14—16 (überaus schwungvoll als Ausdruck des *Soli Deo Gloria*), Nr. 51 (Neujahr), Nr. 15, 5—8, oder Nr. 36, 4—8 (Weihnachten), Nr. 342, 1—4 (Weihnachten — Gottes Gnadenrat — Rechtfertigung), Nr. 342, 5—8 (Wohltaten des ersten Artikels — Missionsfest — Heiligung; unvergleichlich markant und passend ist hier B. 6: „zerstör' sein Reich und schaff uns Ruh', auf daß dein' Kirche nehme zu“), Nr. 129, 1—4 (Pfingsten), Nr. 145 oder Nr. 147 (Trinitatis), Nr. 159, 1—3 (Reformationsfest), Nr. 420 (Lazarus — Jüngling zu Nain — Jairi Tochter — vom seligen Sterben) usw.

Die mancherlei Vermeldungen u. dgl. unmittelbar nach der Predigt führen den Zuhörer immer etwas vom Grundgedanken des Gottes-

dienstes ab. Darum ist es äußerst geboten, daß er in etlichen sorgfältig gewählten Versen nach der Predigt nochmal kräftig an das Thema des Tages erinnert und ihm zugleich Gelegenheit geboten wird, in diesem vierten Liede gewissermaßen seinen Respons zum gehörten Wort zu geben. Wer im Wählen seiner Lieder geschickt ist, kann gerade in diesem vierten Liede mit einigen treffenden Versen ganz gewaltig die behandelte Gotteswahrheit tief in die Herzen einbrennen.

Der Schlußvers (resp. die Schlußverse) ist auch gerade kein so unwesentliches Ding. Gerade die zuletzt gesungenen Strophen können die Erbauung noch vertiefen oder auch — verflachen. Zuweilen wird ja „der letzte Vers des eben angefangenen Liedes“ eine ganz treffliche Abrundung des ganzen Gottesdienstes bilden. Doch in vielen Fällen wird man gerade auch den Schlußvers prüfend wählen müssen. Stramme Liturgen behaupten nun, der Schluß solle niemals eine Bitte, sondern stets eine Doxologie sein. Dagegen kann man natürlich einwenden, daß das durchaus nicht unbedingt so sein muß, und ferner, daß das wohl nirgends unter uns fester Brauch ist. Wenn aber einer sich das für seine Liederwahl zur festen Regel machen will, so sollte er auch bei dieser (stereotypen) Praxis wenigstens das ewige Einerlei vermeiden. In unserm Gesangbuch gibt es außer Nr. 11 und 12 eine große Anzahl herrlicher Doxologien. Man findet sie in den Schlußversen vieler, vieler Lieder. Da hat man denn eine reiche Auswahl und kann eben auch da wieder oftmals (wir bleiben bei unserer Stange!) das Predigtthema berücksichtigt finden. Zum Exempel: Eine ganze Liste von Themata berühren solche Doxologien wie Nr. 300, 9; 301, 9. 10 (ungemein schwungvolle Doxologie); 348, 5; 365, 7 (prächtigt!); 374, 9; 162, 3; 441, 8 u. a. m. Doch, wie gesagt, es ist unter uns weder nötig noch üblich, daß der Schluß immer eine Doxologie sei. Wir entlassen gern unsere Zuhörer mit einer Bitte, einem Dank oder einer gegenseitigen Ermunterung, wohl auch zuweilen mit einer Ermahnung auf den Lippen. Ein musterhaftes „Amen“ ist natürlich immer und für irgendeine Gelegenheit Lied Nr. 3. Dazu gesellen sich verschiedene schöne Amen-Verse unter mehreren diversen Liedern. Doch das eigentliche Ganze wird am besten und segensvollsten gewahrt, wenn man gerade den Brocken des großen Lebensbrotes, den man in der Predigt besonders aufgetischt hat, dem Zuhörer noch zu guter Letzt im Schlußvers zur Lehre, zur Warnung, zur Mahnung, zum Gebet, zum Bekenntnis, zur Zuversicht mit auf den Heimweg gibt. Wenn man recht sucht, wird selten das so Gewünschte ungefunden bleiben.

Ceterum censeo: Ein also abgerundeter, um einen Grundgedanken gesponnener Gottesdienst wird nicht nur für den aufmerksamen Zuhörer, sondern auch für den Pastor selbst einen höheren geistlichen Genuß bilden. So gestaltet man auch die neutestamentlichen Gottesdienste zu „schönen Gottesdiensten des Herrn“. The o. J. Geßwein.

(Schluß folgt.)

Literatur.

Die religiöse Bewegung der Gegenwart. Aus Natur und Geisteswelt. Von R. Kessler. 840. Band. Verlag und Druck von B. G. Teubner in Leipzig und Berlin. Preis: Goldmark 1.60.

Dieses Buch kann wertvolle Dienste leisten zur Orientierung über mancherlei Erscheinungen der Jetztzeit auf dem Gebiete der Religion, besonders was Deutschland anbetrifft. Der Verfasser ist ein durchaus moderner, aufgeklärter Theolog. Er handelt von Religionsgeschichte, -psychologie und -philosophie wie auch von Theosophie, der modernen Mystik und von Aktivismus (social Christianity). Schließlich stellt er eine Reihe von Forderungen an die Theologie, die Kirche und die Schule, worin er zeigt, wie das von ihm Ausgeführte Verwertung finden soll. Wie diese Forderungen ausfallen, kann sich der Leser leicht denken, nachdem der theologische Standpunkt des Verfassers genannt worden ist. So leid es einem tut, man muß konstatieren, daß hier das nackte Heidentum vor die Kirche hintritt und für sich Hausrecht verlangt. A.

Biblical Texts for Special Occasions. By Paul W. Nesper. Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O. 327 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$2.00, net. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

This is Roemer's *Textbuch fuer Prediger*, rendered into English with modifications from the American point of view. Pages 9—91 contain texts suitable for the festivals of the church-year, including a great many New Year and Lenten texts. Passages suitable for occasional sermons (*Kasualreden*) occupy pages 92—202, the section Funeral being especially well provided. The remaining third of the book contains texts for synodical events, mission-festivals, church societies, national holidays, and baccalaureate addresses. Useful features added to the book are the Eisenach, Lenski, Synodical Conference, and Thomasius selections of pericopal texts. The price, \$2.00, is not too high. G.

In the Master's Vineyard. Serious and entertaining sketches from the life of a Lutheran pastor. By Rev. A. F. Augustin. Wartburg Publishing House, Chicago, Ill. 1923. 183 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.25.

Some years ago Rev. Augustin wrote a book of reminiscences of pastoral life on the Western frontier, which was exceptionally well received. It has now been translated into English by Rev. H. Brueckner under the title announced above. The book is marked by a kindly humor, and the reading of it leaves one with the impression of a wholesome and engaging personality. The translator has succeeded in carrying over into English garb the intangible something which we call in German *Gemueth*, which has endeared the original German volume to its readers. G.

The Spiritual Message of Modern English Poetry. By Arthur S. Hoyt. The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y. 1924. Price, \$2.00.

The poets treated of here are Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, and a number of lesser lights. There is much here to enrich and ennoble the mind. Alas! the book has more of cultural than of spiritual value. The reader is warned not to forget to bring his own *granum salis* as he prepares to sit down at Mr. Hoyt's table. A.